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Since the 1960's, there has been a sizeable migration of Puerto Rican and other Spanish-speaking people to New York City. Many Chinese also migrated there when the Chinese quota was increased from about 100 to over 20,000 persons for 1968-69. In order to plan for effective occupationally related English teaching for these two groups, their characteristics and special needs were studied. The MPTD (Manpower Development Training Program) is a federally funded pre-vocational job training program in which trainees (unemployed and underemployed youths and adults) are recruited and processed by the United States Employment Service. The Chinese and Spanish-speaking trainees and their English-speaking classmates attend shop classes from the first instructional day. The non-English-speaking have varying language proficiencies, and are programed from the shops on the basis of vocational aptitudes. For those with little or no English comprehension, paraprofessionals, such as interpreters and instructor aides, are provided. Special Basic Education English Language Classes may range from one to five hours. The five-hour program, for example, consists of an hour each of oral English language structure, reading comprehension, language-oriented arithmetic, reading and discussion of work-related problems, and individual remediation. A discussion of some techniques which have proved effective with trainees learning English in the MDTP concludes the paper. (AMM)

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TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS FOR TEACHING VOCATIONALLY RELATED ESOL TO YOUTH AND ADULT CHINESE AND SPANISH TRAINEES IN THE NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION, MDTP

Evelyn K. Sussman, Ed. D.

BACKGROUND

Teaching and Learning of Occupationally Related English for youth and adult speakers of other languages is a challenging but rewarding experience for both teachers and learners alike. The learner desperately needs the language tools to help him get a satisfying job and become part of the mainstream of life in the United States. The teacher is continually inspired by the visible progress of his students' ability to communicate in English, to read trade manuals and to function efficiently in the shop and on the job.

Since the 1960's, there has been a sizable migration of Puerto Rican and other Spanish speaking people to New York City. When the Chinese quota was increased from about 100 to more than 20,000 persons for 1968-1969, many Chinese came to New York City. In order to plan for effective occupationally related ESL teaching, it was necessary to study the characteristics and special needs of both groups as they affect the learning patterns. Some similarities are as follows:

1. Although the most ambitious persons migrate, they possess few skills for vocational advancement in New York City.
2. There is a wide range of academic proficiencies and English language fluencies.
3. Many homeland mores are being questioned, such as the traditional obedience to family authority. This is accelerated by some youths, especially those with working mothers, who are learning undesirable habits from American friends.

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4. The majority of Spanish and Chinese speaking trainees, however, are diligent, hardworking, and possess a natural dignity and pride--all of which are important assets in learning the new communication skills.
5. For all teachers, especially the ESL teacher, it is necessary to remember that the "yes" of a student may mean "I heard you" but not necessarily " I understand you."
6. Speakers of Spanish and Chinese find that their native language differs from English in the following ways:

    a) sentence order, including the asking of questions.

    b) use of negatives, contractions, and auxiliaries.

    c) Omission of word endings, especially the plurals.

    d) inflections and accents.

In addition, Chinese students may speak a variety of dialects but the written symbol is always the same so that each Chinese character is vocalized. This leads to oral English which follows a jerky sentence intonation pattern. The lack of tense, inflection, voice, gender, and singular and plural forms in Chinese grammar means that common usage skill drills must be carefully prepared by the ESL teacher (show the Lee Article on "Teaching English to Chinese Students").

MDTP

The MDTP is a federally funded pre-vocational job training program (show MDTP Booklets in three languages). Trainees are recruited and processed by the United States Employment Service from unemployed and underemployed youth and adults for training in pre-vocational skill areas. However, those trainees who lack 8th grade proficiences in Language Arts or in Arithmetic are given two or more periods in Basic Education, which are then deducted from the shop schedule.

The Chinese and Spanish speaking trainees and their English speaking classmates attend shop classes from the first instructional day. Since trainees are programmed from the shops on the basis of vocational aptitudes, the students possess varying language proficiencies. For those who have little or no English comprehension, para professionals, such as interpreters and instructor aides, are provided.

BASIC ED

However, there are special Basic Ed Language Classes for speakers of other languages. An ESL program may range from one to five hours. For example, a 1 - 2 hour program usually offers instruction in oral English and in reading comprehension. The five hour program contains the following:

1) The first hour is oral English stressing language structure.

2) The second hour is reading comprehension.

3) The third hour is language oriented arithmetic.

4) The fourth hour is the "World of Work" including reading and discussing of work-related problems (job applications, interviews)

5) And the final fifth hour is devoted to individual remediation (which includes language with speech or whatever the trainee needs most).

The techniques and materials for the teaching of vocationally related ESL are based upon the language level of the trainees and the needs of the shop. Although the vocabulary and content are shop oriented, simple structure patterns through oral repetitive drill must remain the main method used with beginners.

Para-professionals assist with remediation drills on a one-to-one basis under the supervision of the instructor. Follow-up by interpreters and instructors in conjunction with taped dialogues help trainees acquire correct speech habits. Chorus answer drills are also used to correct pronunciation and pattern usage.

Interpreters translate shop materials and make diagrams (show "Light Assembly" Chinese Auto Parts Manual, P. 71) which contain native language terms with the English equivalent. This vocational content used by teachers and trainees forms the basis for English language and arithmetic drills in ESL classes.

In the language classes the teaching of technical vocabulary, such as chassis and schemes in Auto Service groups, and difficult phrases, such as voltage regulator assembly, precedes oral reading. The same procedure of anticipating and preventing obstacles is followed before silent reading comprehension is undertaken (show Puerto Rican Telephone Material for Chinese Auto Service and Commercial trainees).

In the language oriented arithmetic classes, there are drills on basic skills, depending upon the students levels of proficiency. Most MDTP Chinese trainees usually have some math skills which must be reviewed for pre-employment tests. Many Puerto Rican trainees have stopped their formal education at the elementary level and, therefore, have fewer math skills. The emphasis, however, is upon the everyday use of numbers in an English-speaking setting--solving general arithmetic and related shop problems in the English language.

CONCLUSION

Most Puerto Rican and Chinese students need assistance in pronunciation, word attack-skills, and reading comprehension related to pre-vocational areas. Some techniques which have proved effective with ESL trainees in the MDTP are:

1. Permit only English to be spoken once the lesson has begun, unless para-professionals are used as tutors.

2. Emphasize the importance of practicing English with frequency, even if it is only for short intervals. To provide daily practice of English, students are given a brief homework assignment (around 10 minutes) and made aware of the importance of doing this assignment at home instead of during lunch or on the way to school.

3. Encourage students to answer all questions in class in complete sentences.

4. Include lessons on newspaper reading and always select some of the regular vocabulary words from newspapers--words that are of frequent and current usage (e.g., "majority", "minority", "union shop", "discrimination", "escalation"). Students have shown, time and again, the encouragement they feel upon finally understanding something in the papers and on the radio or TV. Recognition of one or two of the key words in an article is usually sufficient to arouse student interest in comprehending the entire article.

5. The teacher who has learned a foreign language may occasionally relate tales of personal mistakes and frustrations in order to help students avoid becoming discouraged. Let students know that it is much more difficult to correct an error that they have made for many years than to acquire a new language skill. Trainees who feel that they have a working knowledge of English will work very hard to improve their English language skills.

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